

Neal, Arthur

From: kengelbert@stny.rr.com%inter2 [kengelbert@stny.rr.com] on behalf of kengelbert@stny.rr.com
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2005 11:42 AM
To: NOSB Livestock
Subject: Fw: Public Comment on Pasture Requirements

This was originally sent to nosb.livestock@usda.gov earlier today, but it was returned as undeliverable. To be sure it was received, it was also sent it to Katherine Benham.

Thank you.

> Dear NOSB:

>
> My wife and I, along with our three sons, own and operate a 120 cow organic dairy farm in upstate New York. We fully endorse the NOSB Pasture guidance document as written.
>
> Pasture is an extremely important component of organic dairy farming. Cows
> on pasture have fewer foot and leg problems and fewer health problems in general. They are truly happy to be out there grazing. There is nothing like watching the cows (even the older cows) run and kick up their heels like heifers when they are turned out on pasture for the first time in the spring.
>
> A minimum of 30% dry matter from pasture for a minimum of 120 days is easily attainable. It represents a very small part of the cows' diet over the course of a year. Many organic farms are meeting this minimum now with no problem.
>
> When we started grazing our cows in 1989, we took some of our best crop land and converted it to pasture. Our neighbors thought we were crazy to take such productive land out of crop production. They didn't realize that pasture is one of the most important "crops" on the farm. Well managed pasture is a very profitable crop. The cows harvest their own high-quality feed and spread their own manure. They harvest their own "crop" at least
8
> times each year as they rotate through the paddocks. If that same land were used for hay, heavy equipment would go over it many times to take 4 cuttings off it, causing some compaction of the land and using a great deal of fuel.
> Pasturing/grazing your cows is a very efficient, ecologically sound and sustainable practice.
>
> When a farmer decides to transition his/her farm to organic production, the farm needs to come into compliance with the organic standards, not try to get the organic standards changed to fit their farm. It is

> imperative to maintain the integrity in the organic industry.

>

> Thank you for your efforts on this very important issue.

>

> Sincerely,

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> Kevin and Lisa Engelbert & Sons

> Engelbert Farms

> 182 Sunnyside Road

> Nichols, NY 13812

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